

## **A Perfect World Vision of Effective Coalitions (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)**

### **Coalitions and the Drug Free Communities Grants**

1. Coalitions are the vehicles for CSAP's Drug Free Communities Grant Program
2. Coalitions are guided by CSAP's Strategic Prevention Framework and are concerned with showing progress at the community level (not the individual level)
3. DFC Grants fund capacity building not services (20% cap on direct services)
4. Coalition members create a Strategic Plan for the community based on needs assessment and existing resources.
5. The Strategic Plan guides the work of coalition and coalition member agencies by unifying the efforts of key agencies in the community.
6. The coalition itself is involved in "indirect services"
  - a. **Indirect services** can be characterized as an approach to prevention whereby the coalition builds a system to support and target strategies toward making community level changes as it relates to attitudes, perceptions and norms in our case as it relates to alcohol and other drugs. In order to accomplish this task a community coalition must focus on changing the environment in which they live, work, and attend school; taking a step outside the box by identifying and implementing strategies that will effect community level changes. This approach includes not only the physical environment such as neighborhoods, roads, parks, shopping centers, public facilities, but also our shared beliefs, expectations, and policies (written and unwritten) that govern us, and the media (CSAP).
  - b. **Indirect services** include activities such as ongoing coalition enhancement and development, community education and awareness campaigns, conducting a community needs assessment, conducting a community resource and readiness assessment, ongoing community monitoring (i.e. increases and decreases in drug usage patterns and their consequences) coalition evaluation activities, capacity building at the coalition and community levels, coordination of services and activities geared toward addressing combined goals, developing data infrastructures, data sharing, joint community planning, resource sharing, development and implementation of environmental strategies including social marketing campaigns, activities geared toward changing policies (written and unwritten), building a service delivery infrastructure for prevention and treatment and institutionalizing prevention within the community (CSAP).

### **What is typical of many (most) coalitions?**

Prevention stakeholders get together once a month and update each other on what is going on with prevention efforts. Members more or less "share" what they are doing with one another, but membership does not necessarily lead any of the agencies to change the way they make decisions or how they implement their prevention efforts.

### **In a perfect world, the formation of a Drug Free Communities Grant coalition would have the following outcomes:**

1. Lead to greater collaboration between agencies so that the coalition is the single voice of prevention for the community and activities being implemented across agencies are coordinated to ensure comprehensive coverage and eliminate duplication.
2. Lead to fundamental changes in the way prevention is conducted in the community, as demonstrated by:
  - a. Systematic and data driven planning with coordination of services across agencies.
  - b. Expand existing services to fill service gaps in the community
  - c. Mobilize for more effective advocacy or greater visibility in the community
  - d. Provide better services through interagency communication
  - e. Reduced competition between agencies

- f. Sustained efforts (and therefore outcomes) beyond each individual agency, funding stream or person
- g. Acquisition of new prevention resources (e.g., grants)

### **Recommendations for Coalition Structure**

1. Possess a clear vision and focus
2. Membership is not fluid (each agency representative should commit time necessary for participation)
3. Bylaws, MOUs and conflict resolution policies developed immediately
4. have well defined meeting agendas and a clear purpose for each meeting
5. meeting times used to make real and meaningful decisions that have importance
6. development of agreed to and written guidelines for decision making, conflict resolution and membership criteria (including roles and responsibilities)
7. Coalition engages in strategic planning and acts together in implementing the plan
8. Limit the number of key members: 15-20 Members (ad hoc groups and of counsel members added as necessary)
9. No agency has more than 10% of voting seats
10. Create "of counsel" positions for individuals who participate but do not cast votes

## **Core Competencies for Coalitions**

### Community Assessment

- a. identify issues and goals
- b. review data
- c. develop community profile

### Analyze the Issue or Problem

- a. define community problems in appropriate language
- b. apply local data
- c. understand challenges and barriers
- d. understand root causes

### Develop a Strategic Plan

- a. develop a personal vision
- b. develop a community vision
- c. develop a mission statement
- d. set objectives
- e. identify strategies

### Community Action and Intervention

- a. develop an action plan
- b. promote collaboration
- c. build cultural competence
- d. develop an intervention

### Social Marketing of Ideas or Practices/Media Advocacy

- a. conducting an advocacy campaign
- b. utilizing social marketing to create or improve healthy behaviors

### Evaluation

- a. evaluate a specific program or intervention
- b. evaluate and document a comprehensive community initiative

### Sustain the Effort

- a. plan for sustainability of your organization or group
- b. plan for sustainability of a particular program or strategy
- c. develop a grant application
  - a. searching for and finding funders interested in your program
  - b. developing grant writing and application skills
  - c. understanding when and how to use data in a grant

## **Essentials in Community Problem Solving**

### Organize the Community

### Assess the Problem through Data

### Plan for Needed Changes and Interventions

### Evaluate Implementation and Results